

# DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES



## CHAFEE IL NEWS BULLETIN

Moving Indiana Foster Youth Toward Permanency

October 2006

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<http://www.in.gov/dcs/policies/cwmanual.html>

### Transition Planning Conference for Youth at age 17

The new policy that came into effect on July 1, 2006 requires that a transition planning conference take place for youth at age 17 to assist the youth in developing plans for the time when they will no longer be provided with room and board payments by the county. The Independent Living Transition Planning Toolkit (the toolkit is located at <http://www.state.in.us/icpr/webfile/formsdiv/dcs.html> under Child Welfare Forms) must be completed during this conference in order to see what the youth currently has in their inventory and what is needed in the next six months to move them toward independence at age 18 or older. The youth must be present at all planning conferences as it is their future that is being decided. Planning takes time and the youth need to be assisted in developing plans based on their needs at this conference.

Some youth may need to take a hard look at where they are educationally and determine if they will be able to graduate before their case is dismissed or if they need to consider preparing for the GED test. Others may be planning to go to college and need assistance in preparing for the SAT or ACT test and then signing up to take the test. They may also need assistance in completing the financial aid forms (FAFSA) so that they can receive state funding and the Pell grant. They need to be made aware of the Education and Training Voucher Program which can assist them while attending college or vocational programs.

If not currently employed, it is important that they consider obtaining part time employment so that they have job skills in order to obtain full time employment when their case is dismissed in order to maintain housing and meet their other needs related to living independent of the system. Opportunities to provide volunteer services should be considered since this activity allows the youth to develop relationships with adults as well as developing skills that will benefit them in the workplace as well as building their resume.

It is also important during this planning process that the youth understand their responsibility in obtaining and maintaining employment in order to maintain the housing that they may be provided with upon their case dismissal. Maintaining consistency in employment will be the key in maintaining stability in their lives. Planning is the first step in making it all happen!

The importance of planning is obvious based on the outcome measures report that was obtained from information provided by the youth working with Chafee service providers from August 2005 to August 2006. 20% of the 372 youth in care and 20% of the 213 emancipated youth responded that they did not know where they were going to live after foster care. This is not an outcome that is acceptable for Indiana youth.

### Transition Services Referral at age 17½

In providing training to residential facility staff, group homes staff, and therapeutic and special needs foster care staff, it became obvious that there are still a large number of youth who have

### Education and Training Voucher Program

<https://www.statevoucher.org/>

### Foster Club Website

<http://www.fosterclub.com/index.cfm>

### CONTACT US:

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765-762-6125 Warren County DCS  
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not been referred for Transition Services that are placed in these programs.

It is vital that transition referrals are made for youth in these facilities to prepare the youth for employment and housing when the county is no longer paying a per diem for their room and board. The youth can voluntarily request services at age 18 when their case is dismissed, but if we have not helped them plan and locate a place to live, they will be homeless until the contracted agency can help them locate housing and pay the deposit and first months rent and deposits on utilities. Since the DCS removed them from their parents, it is the responsibility of the DCS to ensure that they have a place to go to when their case is dismissed. Making timely referrals will allow all youth aging out of foster care to have a successful move into their own place.

It is important to understand that youth placed in scattered site apartments are being completely funded by the DCS through a contract with the placement agency. This placement is a wonderful opportunity for a youth to learn how to live alone and manage their time and wages from part time employment since many of them are still in high school. The transition referral must be made while youth are in their own apartments to a contracted Chafee service provider so the youth has financial assistance with the rent once the case is dismissed and the funding to the agency is no longer paying the rent or utility bills. While the youth is learning about paying rent and utilities, they are not paying it out of their own funds so must learn how to manage once these expenses become their responsibility.

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## Youth Not Aware of the Education and Training Voucher Program

In reviewing the data from the Outcome Measures that was collected by the Chafee service providers from the youth being served, 59% of 372 youth in care and 36% of 213 emancipated youth reported that they were not aware of the ETV program. Since this program is there to assist them in furthering their education, we must make sure that all youth aging out of care are provided with information about this program at the Transition Planning Conferences and provided with assistance in applying for these funds. Youth may apply at [www.statevoucher.org](http://www.statevoucher.org) and must complete the application including the essay portion. Prior to applying for ETV funding, the youth must apply for financial aid (FAFSA) if they are attending a program that accepts federal funds. The youth should apply for financial aid before March 10<sup>th</sup> so that they will also be eligible for any state funds that may be available. The youth may apply for financial aid at any time after March 10<sup>th</sup> but will lose the opportunity to access state funds after this time. The ETV website provides information related to Indiana colleges and universities, vocational programs, study tips, and much, much more.

To be eligible for ETV funds:

- ✓ Must have turned 18 in foster care, or
- ✓ Was adopted or placed in a guardianship after the age of 16 from foster care

ETV funds provide up to \$5,000 annually for out to attend college or vocational programs

Funds are available for:

- |                               |                       |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1) Tuition                    | 5) Transportation     |
| 2) Repayment of student loans | 6) Housing assistance |
| 3) Books                      | 7) Living expenses    |
| 4) School supplies            | 8) Child care         |

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## Save the Date for the 2007 IL Youth Conferences!

Planning is already underway for the 2007 IL Youth Conferences. There will be three conferences in 2007 so that a conference will be held in the North, Central, and South preventing long distances for anyone to travel. The dates are:

June 13<sup>th</sup> at Indiana University in Bloomington

June 14<sup>th</sup> at Ivy Tech in Kokomo

June 15<sup>th</sup> at Ivy Tech in South Bend

Please put these dates on your calendar and plan to bring youth age 16 and older to one of the conferences. Since the panel of former foster youth was so popular in 2006, even more foster youth and former foster youth will be panelists and facilitators at the 2007 conferences.

The new State Youth Advisory Board youth will be participating as will the youth that are involved in the long term study that is being conducted by Luther Consulting of Indianapolis.

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## Drive of Your Life / Trip to College

### **[www.DriveOfYourLife.org](http://www.DriveOfYourLife.org)**

This is an Indiana-specific video game-style tool that helps middle school students learn more about themselves, higher education and careers. As the students navigate through the site and answer groups of questions about their likes and dislike, they get to build their own "cyber car". At the end of the program, students get a printable "license": with a list of careers that match their interests and the high school courses that will help them achieve their dreams.

### **[www.TripTo College.org](http://www.TripToCollege.org)**

Trip to College was developed as an Indiana-specific, comprehensive step-by-step resource to assist with the college planning and funding process for students in grades K-12. This program provides a college planning timeline, facts, figures and information about preparing for a college education and information on Indiana colleges and more.

These websites are hosted by the Indiana Youth Institute.

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## Scholarship for Former Foster Youth

<http://www.loveourchildrenusa.org/scholarship.php>

The Darko Rapotez Memorial College Scholarship Fund For Aged Out Foster Youth (*an initiative of Love Our Children USA*) is a scholarship program that has been established to assist youths who age out of the foster care system who wish to further their education.

This is not just a scholarship, but an opportunity for aged out foster youths who have excelled in school to strive for excellence and the highest achievement.

The program enables these youths to further their studies, allowing them to become independent - to achieve success and give back to their communities. More than just financial assistance - each scholarship recipient will be matched and mentored by a business leader in the community where they are studying throughout their college education, giving them a real hands-on view of the business world. It is an investment in their future.

Scholarship recipients will receive financial assistance with college/tuition fees only. Books and supplies, housing and transportation costs are not included. Scholarships are available to youths between the ages of 18 to 24 years of age who have aged out of the foster care system.

Scholarships will be awarded to youths who have aged out of the foster care system on the basis of academic excellence and need. Youths from anywhere in the United States, who age out of the foster care system and who ordinarily would not be able to afford a college education are eligible and encouraged to submit applications.

Youths must be emancipated or will be graduating from foster care. The scholarship will be available to undergraduate students who have aged out of the foster care system with not less than a **GPA of 3.0 or higher.**

Scholarship recipients will receive up to \$5,000 to \$10,000 per year or as much as the fund will allow. Students are encouraged to reapply for each academic year.

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# Writing Contests for Foster Youth and Former Foster Youth

## NEW CONTEST from FosterClub

ENTER BY November 15th, 2006!

1st place: \$35

2nd place: \$20

3rd place: \$15

Our spirituality is often guided by religious foundations in a particular faith or belief systems. As foster youth, we often lose touch with our spiritual roots and are sometimes exposed to different religions as we move from home to home. This can be a difficult experience for some and a source of strength for others. We want to hear about your experience with faith and spirituality in foster care.

### INSTRUCTIONS:

To enter this month's contest, simply write about your experience, whether you feel it is good or bad, and submit your essay at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=921732667098>

<http://www.fosterclub.com/funstuff/contest.cfm>      Winners will be selected from the entries!

### RULES:

1. You must currently be a foster youth.
2. You must have your foster parent or guardian's permission to enter.
3. By entering the contest, you give FosterClub permission to display your work on our website and use it for other promotional and publishing purposes. The full name of the writer will never be published, but first names only will be used (i.e. "John from Portland").
4. Winners will be notified by mail.

## REPRESENT: THE VOICE OF YOUTH IN CARE

FIRST PRIZE \$100      SECOND PRIZE: \$50      THIRD PRIZE: \$25

### CONTEST SUBMISSION:

Anyone 21 or under who lives in a group home or with a foster family (or who used to be in foster care) can enter.

**Contest #178— Deadline: November 13, 2006**

Tell us about your best or worst holiday memory.

**Contest #81— Deadline: December 1, 2006**

What have your experiences with family court been like? Tell us about your lawyer, judge, and whether you get what you need.

### Send your essays to:

New Youth Connections  
224 W. 29th St.—2nd Floor  
New York, NY 10001

Or FAX your entry to: 212-279-8856 or e-mail it to [Representmail@youthcomm.org](mailto:Representmail@youthcomm.org)

*PS: Please print your first and last names and your address very clearly on your entry. If typing, use Times New Roman or Arial font only. Do not use cursive fonts.*